

Simanim

“21” Game

As a group, the entire family must say the simanim of the Seder (“kadesh, u’rchatz, etc...”) in order, with the following conditions:

1. Only the names of the simanim can be said
2. One person speaks at a time
3. If two people speak at a time, you must start over
4. No communication allowed

Simanim Opinions

- Each person has a set of cards with one of the simanim on each card.
- The “host” asks the question and everyone looks for the right answer.
- When time is up, everyone holds their answers up on the count of three

Questions (Feel free to create your own)

1. Name a step of the seder that don’t involve saying anything (**U’rchatz, Yachatz, S”O**)
2. Name the two steps of seder that end with the same three letters (**S”O, Korech**)
3. Name the step of the seder that has no relation to eating or drinking (**Nirtzah**)
4. Which two steps of the seder could be called the “LMNOP” of the seder? (**M”M**)
5. Which step of the seder is an anagram for the Hebrew word for almond? (**Kadesh**)
6. Which step of the seder did Yaakov scream when he was injured by Eisav’s malach? (**Ma gid!**)

Opinion Question: Which step of the seder would you include as an olympic sport? Why?

Opinion Question: Which step of the seder would you explain to someone to convince them to become Jewish? Why?

Karpas

“Why am I crying?” Charades

Being that the salt water represents the tears of Bnei Yisrael, here are some charades to act out:

- I failed a test
- I am a slave to Pharaoh
- My pet fish died
- I am davening to Hashem to be saved
- I fell off my bike
- I want candy, but my parents said no

Yachatz/Ha Lachma Anya

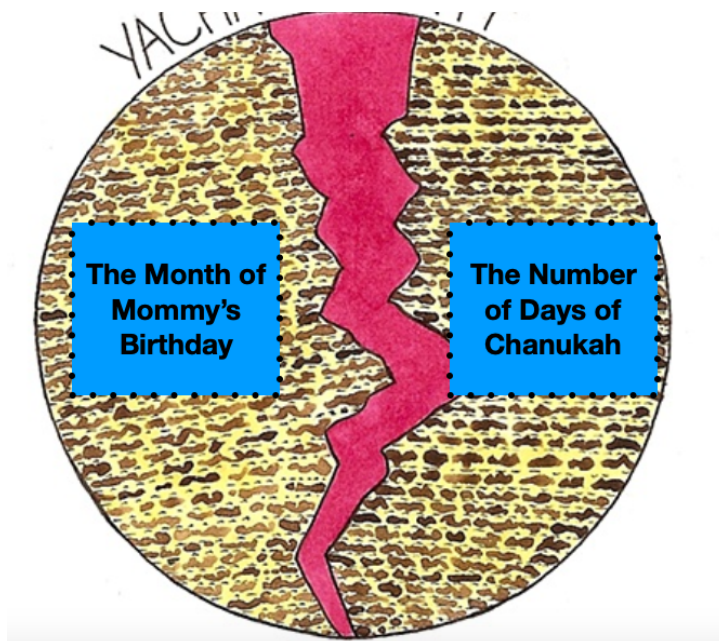
“Which is the Afikomen?” Game

The Afikomen is the bigger half of the broken matzah. This game takes a “broken matzah” and puts different number values on each half. The goal is to figure out which is the Afikomen (the larger number).

Tips:

- Can use any category (Math, Torah, Family Birthdays, etc...)
- Each child/academic level in the family should have different questions
- Great activity for a child to prepare

Sample:



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Ha Lachma Anya - Weakness to strength

The idea of Yachatz/Ha Lachma Anya is that the Matzah represents the entire story. It has elements of slavery ("poor man's bread" etc...), and of freedom (we didn't have time for bread to bake when we were freed). By breaking it in half and hiding the Afikomen, we are showing that often bad things (smaller part/slavery) can lead to good things (freedom/becoming Hashem's people). But we don't always see how the bad leads to the good until later on, which is why we hide the Afikomen.

Here is a story about how someone's weakness can become their strength. But it took time to see how the good would come from the bad.

A 10-year-old boy decided to study Judo despite the fact that he had lost his left arm in a devastating car accident. The boy began lessons with an old Japanese Judo Master Sensei. The boy was doing well, so he couldn't understand why, after three months of training the master had taught him only one move.

"Sensei," the boy finally said, "Shouldn't I be learning more moves?" "This is the only move you know. but this is the only move you will ever know," the Sensei replied. Not quite understanding, but believing in his teacher, the boy kept training. Several months later, the Sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged. The boy deftly used his one move to win the match.

Still amazed by his success, the boy was now in the finals. This time, his opponent was bigger, stronger and more experienced. For a while, the boy appeared to be overmatched. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a time-out. He was about to stop the match when the sensei intervened. "No," the Sensei insisted, "Let him continue."

Soon after the match resumed, his opponent made a critical mistake. He dropped his guard. Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him. The boy had won the match and the tournament. He was the champion.

On the way home, the boy and Sensei reviewed every move in each and every match. Then the boy summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind. "Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move?" "You won for two reasons," the Sensei answered. "First, you've almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of Judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm."

The boy's biggest weakness had become his biggest strength.

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Individual Examples

Here are two examples of people whose weakness became their strengths. Start by describing them and ask “how can someone turn these into strengths?” Then reveal who they are/what they did.

Can't sit still in class, mind always wandering, asking questions over and over
(Thomas Edison)

Spoke late, mouthed sentences before saying them, trouble with expressing words, bad at arithmetic. Here's a quote: "When I read I hear the words. Writing is difficult, and I communicate this way very badly." **(Albert Einstein)**

This quote explains how Einstein's weaknesses became his strength

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." - Albert Einstein

Follow-up discussion: What about slavery?

Discuss ways in which the Jewish people being slaves in Egypt may have turned into strengths for us. (Allows us to feel empathy towards oppressed people, taught us how to serve, so we could serve Hashem, etc...)

Mah Nishtana/Avadim Hayenu

Intro to Avadim Hayenu Poem

You can either have children read the poem or have an adult read the poem and see if the kids can guess the rhyming words (meaning, when you get to a word that's going to finish a rhyme, stop and see if they can guess it).

With the **מה נשתנה** the children want to know badly,
why some things at the seder make us act sadly.
Like eating flat **מצה**, as in the slavery years
and **מרור** which reminds of **בני ישראל**'s tears.
(and don't forget **כרפס**, dipped in salt water
and **חרוסת** which is meant to look like brick mortar)

It then gets confusing - if we are so upset
then why before **פסח** do we go out and get
bottles of wine, isn't that for the free?
And is that you dipping and leaning I see?

Which one is **פסח** - is the day happy or sad?
This is what children ask their moms and dads
The answer is that joy is the point of the seder,

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But in Egypt, the smiles had to wait for later.

So we do both on Pesach, the sweet and the bitter,
To remind us that Hashem, he is no quitter.
He made us a promise and to it he stuck,
So we start with גנות, but we finish with שבה.

One day He would free us, Hashem always knew,
so let's remember this with עבדים היינו

Pharaoh Says, Bnei Yisrael Say

This is a game of Simon Says, but with Pharaoh and Bnei Yisrael. Start with Pharaoh as the Simon and have him make Bnei Yisrael do difficult tasks. Then switch with "Bnei Yisrael" and have each member of Bnei Yisrael alternate ordering Pharaoh around with "Bnei Yisrael say..." and have him do things like react to certain makkot ("Bnei Yisrael say drink blood" - he can just act it out) or other things related to the story.

Intro to Ma'aseh b' Rabi Eliezer Dialogue

The story of Ma'aseh b'Rabi Eliezer teaches us that telling the story of Yetziyat Mitzrayim is not just to learn the basics, but it is to bring about feelings of pride and faith within us. For this reason, it doesn't matter how much you know, you should involve yourself in the discussion as much as possible.

This rhyming dialogue involves two Rabbis. One, who thinks he doesn't need to tell the story because he knows it all, and a second who teaches the first through Ma'aseh b'Rabi Eliezer, that this is not true.

RC: Hello, my name is Rabbi Chacham, and something's troubling me.
I am an expert in everything about *Yetziyat Mitzrayim*, you see.
The pesukim in the Torah I know all by heart,
I've actually learned it all three times and I am very smart.
I know every Midrash, every story and song.
So can you explain to me why I have to spend all night long,
Talking about all of this? It's making me feel blue,
It would make me much happier to learn something new.

RP: Ah, Rabbi Chacham, your problem to me seems clear.
You are struggling to understand why it is every year,
we read the same haggadah, and tell the same stories too.
Well I understand your question, and I have an answer for you.
You see, the point of the haggadah is not to learn new stuff,

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if that were true then doing it one year would be just enough.
Instead we are remembering the great chessed of Hashem,
to feel the trust and gratitude that we have for him.
So even if we know the story it still helps to repeat,
the Haggadah every year, before we sit down to eat.

RC: Thank you Rabbi Pesach for explaining this to me,
now I can read the Haggadah this year so happily.
But please let me ask one more question of you,
this idea is really nice, but how do you know it's true?

RP: I'm glad you asked, Rabbi Chacham; the answer's right in here (waves Haggadah).
We read the story of five Rabbis who got together one year.
Even though they were all geniuses and knew the Haggadah by heart,
they sat around discussing it and reading every part.
They were Rabbis Eliezer, Yehoshua, and Elazar ben Azaryah.
Also there was Rabbi Tarfon, and Rabbi Akiva.
If they had to read the story, then of course me and you,
and everyone, no matter what, must read the story too!

To be recited after Ma'aseh b'Rabi Eliezer

This conclusion brings the conversation to the seder table. Discuss which things your family members say each day without thinking about it. (Shema, "I love you," etc...)

RC: Now I understand that some important things are really worth repeating
even if you know it like you know your heart is beating.

RC: (turns to everyone else): So I ask the rest of you, what is it that you say,
every year, every month, or even every day?

Arba'ah Banim

Rejected Four Sons

A cute poem/guessing game. See if the kids can guess which "son" is being described.

He is not the one you want to meet
taking off his shoes, boots, sneakers, or cleats.
No one would say his socks' scent is sweet,
This is the son who... **(has smelly feet)**

Here's another rhyme to keep you on your toes.
This guy never takes a tissue and blows.
His hands are full of germs, and so are his clothes.
This is the son who... **(picks his nose)**

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This guy is always beat up and bruised.
From tripping and falling, he's all blacks and blues.
It's not that he's clumsy, or that he's confused.
This is the son who... **(can't tie his shoes)**

Another son who didn't make the cut:
When he eats certain foods, he gets a rash on his gut.
He's not in the Haggadah, but I'll tell you what,
this is the son who's **(allergic to nuts)**

Newlywed Game

How Well Do You Know Your Children? The idea behind the Four Sons is that different children need to be taught differently. Parents must know their children well in order to know how to communicate with them effectively.

For this game, pair up parents and children. First, send the children out and ask parents questions to see how well they know that child. Afterwards, call the children in and ask them the same questions and see how well each parent knows their children. You can rotate pairings, as long as you have enough questions for a second round.

Four Sons Opinion Questions

Like for the Simanim, each person at the seder gets a set of cards with each of the Four Sons (and for each family member, if your family likes teasing each other). A question is asked and after 30 seconds to think, each person holds his or her card up on the count of three. For added fun/competition, the least popular answer with a decent explanation wins a point for each question.

Questions (Feel free to add your own)

Which of the Four Sons would make the best...

1. President?
2. Husband?
3. Magician?
4. Host?
5. Uber Driver?
6. Lawyer?
7. Superhero?
8. Person to be stranded with on an island?

And if you like family drama:

Which person at the seder is the...

1. Chacham?
2. Rasha?
3. Tam?
4. Sheino Yodeah Lish'ol?

Mi'tchila Ovdei Avodah Zara

This section of the Haggadah (through Dayenu) is where the real storytelling happens. We go through Jewish history to show that, just as we come from idol worshippers and yet Hashem took us to be His people, there is always an opportunity to turn things around for us as a nation. We go from Avraham to Yaakov to our slavery, and eventually to the 10 makkot and our freedom.

Introduction Poem (Have kids guess the rhyming words)

There's more way we remember the bad to good
We used to bow to statues made of silver or wood.
Until Avraham this was always the way
A lot of idol worship back in his day.

So we thank Hashem for taking us away
to become His special people and that's how we'll stay
A promise was given that we always be protected
even if at times Hashem we rejected.
This promise has stood up for us, "והיא שעמדה"
Now let's read about our history, "עובדי עבודה זרה מתחילה"

Timeline Shuffle

Being that this section of the Haggadah can be very difficult for children (and for adults) of all ages, this is a good time to simplify the content and to try and change locations. For this, you can use a "timeline shuffle activity." Print out (or write) a list of events in Jewish history, each event on a different piece of paper. Shuffle it up and see if the kids (or other adults) can put it all in order. This needs a big space, so it's a good time to move to the floor or another location. The more advanced version has pesukim instead of events to see if they can be placed in order.

This activity will be shared on a separate doc.

Ask the Adults

A nice activity that can be used at any point during the seder. A child can stop the Seder at (almost) any point - up to you to decide the ground rules - and ask a question of an adult at the table. Better if children share their questions before the Seder so the adults have a chance to think about them. Below is a sample list of questions, but it can be anything - and of course better if your children come up with the questions on their own.

ASK THE ADULTS!

HEY KIDS! At points during the Seder you will have a chance to ask an adult a question about Pesach or about being Jewish. Think about which question(s) you want to ask and to whom. You can use one of the questions below or choose your own question.

1. If you were to add two stanzas to Dayenu from your life what would they be?
2. We do things tonight so children will ask questions. What is a question that you have about being Jewish?
3. Other than Shulchan Orech, what is one part of the Seder you really love and why?
4. In Avadim Hayinu, we say that we are now free, but aren't we still servants to Hashem? In what way does being Jewish make us free?
5. Why do you think it is so important to have so many Pesach mitzvot related to food?
6. Can you share something you remember from the Pesach Seder when you were a child?

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Matzah Trivia

1. After how many minutes of baking does bread become *chametz*? **(18)**
2. How much matzah do you need to eat for the *mitzvah*? **(A kezayit)**
3. Why did the Jewish people eat *matzah* when leaving *mitzrayim*? **(They didn't have time for their bread to bake completely)**
4. What are the 5 grains that can be used to make *matzah*? **(Wheat, Barely, Oats, Rye, Spelt)**
5. How many times do we eat *matzah* at the seder? **(Three)**
6. What kind of cheese did the Jews eat when leaving *mitzrayim*? **(Matah-rella)**
7. What kind of *matzah* burns your mouth? **(Hot-zah)**
8. How much matzah does it take to feed a family of elephants? **(A lot-zah Matzah)**

Maror Trivia

1. Why do we eat maror? **(To remember the bitterness of the slavery)**
2. Why do we dip maror in *charoset*? **(charoset reminds us of the mud we had to use to make bricks, so it is also part of the bitterness)**
3. Nowadays, is Maror a mitzvah from Torah or from the Rabbis? Why? **(From the Rabbis. According to the Torah Maror is part of eating Korban Pesach which we no longer have)**
4. What sound does a bitter lion make? **(Ma-ROAR!)**
5. How can you find where the bitter herbs are hiding in Hogwarts? **(Check the Maror-ders Map)**